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# The Presidents intelligence community: relationship impact evaluation

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# THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY: RELATIONSHIP IMPACT EVALUATION



Naval  
Postgraduate  
School

## Background, Question, Argument

- How does the relationship between the president and IC impact the chance of an intelligence failure occurring?
- What impact does a failure or success have on the relationship between the president and IC?
- Every 4-8 years new president, new administration, new relationship
- Intelligence failures continue to occur and are costly
  - Costly in terms of human, political, financial capital
- Good relationship with the IC is imperative to success
  - Bad relationship doesn't mean only failures
  - Good relationship doesn't mean only success



President Kennedy (right center) with CIA directors Allen Dulles (left center) and John McCone (right)



President George H.W. Bush (L.) meeting with (from left to right) Eagleburger, DCI Webster, NSA Scowcroft, and SECDEF Cheney regarding events in Panama

## Research design

- If a president establishes a good relationship with the IC, he will be more likely to witness operational and intelligence successes during his presidency; whereas a bad relationship will lead to failures, followed by changes to relationship, followed by success.
- Case studies of Kennedy and H.W. Bush used to test validity of hypothesis
- Biographies, memoirs, journal articles were used to establish relationships and impact on operations

## Results

- Hypothesis was supported but with exceptions
- Findings: Good relationship does lead to success, and bad relationship contributes to failures.
- Presidents should appoint trusted, non-political DCI upon taking office and should remain receptive to change and intelligence.
- Not all presidents were interested in correction relationship with IC



President George W. Bush meets with DCI George Tenet

## The “So What”

- Future administrations can use findings to mitigate further intelligence failures

## Next Steps

- How has the creation of the DNI impacted the relationships?
- More presidents, operations, and DCIs/DNIs to evaluate



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